

The Highland Council

Resources Committee – 25 November 2015

Agenda Item	12(b)
Report No	RES/101/15

Employee Survey 2015– Finance Service Results

Report by Director of Finance

Summary

This report provides Members with the key findings for the Finance Service in response to the views expressed in the seventh Highland Council Employee Survey.

1. Background

- 1.1 The seventh Employee Survey was conducted during the week of 20-27 April 2015. A response rate of 63% was achieved within the Finance Service and compares with the overall Council response rate of 36% (up 3% since 2012). The Highland Council results were reported to the Resources Committee on 26 August 2015.
- 1.2 BMG Research report that this level of response rate indicates a robust dataset with 95% confidence that the responses are representative of those that would have been given by all employees.
- 1.3 Improvement Actions at a Corporate level will be agreed with the Staff Partnership Forum and reported for approval on 26 November 2015.
- 1.4 It was also agreed that Service results would be reported to Resources Committee in November and improvement actions, following involvement and consultation with staff, to respective strategic committees early in 2016.

2. Finance Service – Specific Results

- 2.1 Overall, the results are positive with 55 results higher than the Highland Council average, compared with 36 results being lower than the Highland Council average.
- 2.2 63% of Finance Service staff are satisfied with their present job compared with 70% for the Highland Council.
- 2.3 Further analysis of Job satisfaction for Finance Service staff shows that 10 aspects of work satisfaction are higher than the Highland Council and 12 are scored lower.
- 2.4 The table below shows the most notable positive differences between the Finance Service and the Highland Council results:

Factor/Question	Fin 2015	THC2015	Diff
I have had an Employee Review & Development Plan (ERD) within the last 12 months	85%	52%	33%
I have had an ERD	90%	62%	28%
I am aware of the Council's Organisational Values	84%	57%	27%
Satisfied have sufficient resources to do your job	66%	43%	23%
Satisfied with Good Employment Benefits (e.g. leave, pensions, flexible working)	53%	37%	16%
Satisfied with Working Hours	91%	76%	15%
Importance of Pay	73%	58%	15%
Importance of Job Security	66%	51%	15%
Lack of resources as a cause of stress	18%	39%	-21%
Too much bureaucracy as a cause of stress	23%	38%	-15%
General nature of the job as a cause of stress	25%	35%	-10%

2.5 The table below shows the most notable negative differences between the Finance Service and the Highland Council results

Factor/Question	Fin 2015	THC 2015	Diff
Satisfaction - Enjoyment in the work I do	60%	74%	-14%
Satisfaction – Feeling you have accomplished something worthwhile at work	57%	68%	-11%
Satisfaction – interesting work	74%	84%	-10%
Satisfied with job security	56%	65%	-9%
Satisfaction in having the opportunity to show initiative	56%	65%	-9%

3. Views of Line Management and Senior Management

3.1 Line Management

Views of line management are generally positive and include the highest scoring responses in the survey. 78% agreed that their line manager knew their job and 77% agreed that their line manager was approachable.

The table below illustrates the 5 highest and 5 lowest scoring statements about line managers:

Statement about line manager	Fin2015	THC2015	Diff
Top scoring statements			
Knows their job	78%	78%	0%
Is approachable	77%	80%	-3%
Is committed to THC	76%	70%	6%
Is available to speak to	74%	71%	3%
Is open and honest	71%	73%	-2%
Lowest scoring statements			
Manages attendance	62%	55%	7%
Explains why tasks are done	60%	61%	-1%
Gives me credit for a good job	60%	62%	-2%
Does something about the pressure	52%	48%	4%
Acts on my ideas / suggestions	51%	52%	-1%

3.2 Senior Management

Views of senior managers' score lower than views of line managers, but are higher than the Council average.

- Senior managers keep employees informed of their views and decisions: 51% (THC 45%)
- I have confidence in the Senior Managers in my Service: 52% (THC 43%)

4. Information and Communication

4.1 64% of Finance Service staff state that they are kept fully or fairly well informed about the Highland Council as a whole, reflecting the continued efforts being made in this area. This compares with 54% for the Highland Council.

4.2 This figure increases to 66% of staff agreeing that they are kept fully or fairly well informed at a Service level and 68% in the area they work in. The respective Highland Council figures are 61% and 60% respectively.

4.3 E-mail is the preferred method of Finance Service staff for receiving information about the Council (62%), followed by team briefings (face to face) (43%) and meetings with immediate manager (37%). This compares with the Highland Council figures of 53%, 30% and 29%.

5. Training and Performance Improvement

5.1 The Finance Service have a strong track record of undertaking Employee Review and Development (ERD) plans which is reflected in that 90% of staff state that they have had an ERD (compared with 62% for The Council as a whole). 85% of Finance Staff state they have had an ERD in the last 12 months, again compared with 52% for The Highland Council. The Finance Service figure is also well above the public sector benchmark (per BMG) of 74%.

5.2 The table below provides some more comparisons with the Highland Council figures.

	Fin2015	THC2015	Diff
I receive the right amount of training to do my job well	58%	52%	6%
I receive training that is relevant to my current job	55%	53%	2%
I receive training that is relevant to my future career developments	38%	37%	1%
I have received induction training	59%	50%	9%

6. Workload and Stress

- 6.1 The survey includes questions to explore workload and levels of stress experienced during work.
- 6.2 14% of Finance Service employees state that they have too much work to do, compared with 26% for the Council as a whole.
- 6.3 The proportion of people saying they have high or above average levels of stress at work for the Finance Service is 36% and for the Highland Council 44%. Looking at those that state they have a high level of stress, Finance Service is 9% compared with 15% for the Council.
- 6.4 The highest causes of stress in the Finance Service is the same as for the Council as a whole, that is that they have “Too much Work” at 37% (THC 44%). This is followed by “Colleagues negative attitudes” (35%) and “constant change” (27%).

7. Change

- 7.1 Although 82% of Finance Staff understand the need for change (THC 77%), and 64% (THC 56%) support that need, 40% (THC 43%) still find the process a cause for concern. The table provides some further comparisons to the Highland Council figures. All are better than the Council average but nonetheless further work is required to deliver improvements for staff.

	Fin 2015	THC 2015	Diff
I understand the need for change	82%	77%	5%
I support the need for change	64%	56%	8%
I look forward to change as a challenge	56%	48%	8%
The reasons for change are well communicated to me	44%	32%	12%
I find the process of change causes me concern	40%	43%	-3%
I receive sufficient training and support when change takes place	35%	26%	9%
Staff are consulted on management decisions	30%	28%	2%
Change here is well managed	29%	25%	4%
Change here is too fast	21%	27%	-6%

8. Strategy, Information and Consultation

- 8.1 Whilst the results are generally positive for the Finance Service and compare favourably against the Council's results, there are some aspects where improvements are necessary. In particular, job satisfaction overall is lower than the Council average and the Service is keen to engage with staff to better understand the actions which we can take improve this.
- 8.2 The Finance Service Management Team (FMT) have agreed a strategy to effectively manage the Service's response to the results of the 2015 Survey.
- 8.3 FMT members will deliver (the same) presentations of the Service-specific results to their staff. The presentations will be delivered throughout the Highlands. Staff will be afforded the opportunity to offer Improvement Actions either during the presentation and/or in writing thereafter, anonymously if preferred.
- 8.4 An Improvement Action plan will be compiled with progress against these actions monitored by the FMT and reported to the Chief Executive's Quarterly Performance Review meetings. A report on progress will also be presented to Resources Committee towards the end of 2016.

9. Implications

- 9.1 There are no particular Resource, Legal, Risk, Equalities, Climate Change/Carbon Clever, Gaelic or Rural implications to highlight in this report.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- a. Note the results of the seventh Employee Survey for the Finance Service.
- b. Note that the results will be presented to staff and that an Improvement Action Plan will be compiled.
- c. Progress against this Improvement Action plan will be monitored by the FMT, reported to the Chief Executive's Quarterly Performance meetings, and reported to Resources Committee towards the end of 2016.

Designation: Director of Finance

Date: 13 November 2015

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